

Probers find no evidence Ray was paid

Washington (AP)

House investigators say they have found no evidence that James Earl Ray was a paid triggerman in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Chief Counsel G. Robert Blakey told the House Assassinations Committee Wednesday that Ray conceivably could have been part of such a conspiracy — but if he was there is no evidence he got his money.

“The fact is that a lot of triggermen carry out a contract and then don’t get paid for it,” Blakey said.

Blakey’s investigators concluded instead that Ray probably financed his escape from Memphis, Tenn., to Europe after King’s assassination April 4, 1968, with money from a \$27,000 bank robbery.

He said they found no payoff stashed in any bank or with any of Ray’s relatives or associates.

And if Ray had been paid off, Blakey said, he would not likely have risked robbing a bank in London when he was wanted worldwide for King’s murder. Investigators say Ray robbed a London bank just before he was arrested June 8, 1968.

Ray pleaded guilty to King’s killing and is now serving a 99-year prison sentence. He recanted his plea almost immediately after making it and now contends he was framed.

Ray tentatively had been scheduled to testify today but the committee voted not to call him and canceled today’s meeting on grounds the cost was not justified.